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THE PROPHET JEREMIAH AND THE PERSONIFICATION OF ISRAEL.

ATTRIBUTED TO KALIR (ABOUT 950 A. D.).

FULL in her glory, she as Tirzah¹ fair
Hath sinned and fallen; lo! the angels weep
There at the threshold of her sanctuary.
Forth from the Temple, over Zion's mount
Wandered Hilkihah's son², and chanced to meet
A woman, beauteous, but with grief distraught.
Appalled I ask, in name of God and man!
"Art thou dread phantom? Art thou human form?
For while thy beauty mouldeth woman fair,
Awe shadoweth spirit from the vast unknown!"

"I am not phantom nor vile clay of earth;
I shall be known when I return in rest³.
Lo! of the one am I! of three am I!
Lo! of six hundred thousand and of twelve!
Yea, and behold me of the seventy-one!
O prophet! know: the 'one' is Abraham;
Three be the fathers; verily in me
Behold the third⁴, God's messenger of peace;
The 'twelve' I show thee, be the tribes of God⁵
Six hundred thousand of redeemed men⁶;
And their Sanhedrin, wrought of seventy-one."

"List to my counsel: Oh return! repent!
Since thou art thus endowed, so proud in state,

¹ Song of Songs, vi. 4.

² Jeremiah.

³ Isa. xxx. 15.

⁴ Isa. xix. 24.

⁵ Ps. cxxii. 4.

⁶ The 600,000 redeemed from Egypt.

'Tis fitting that thou should'st exultant rise,
 To glory in the mission of thy race;
 'Backsliding daughter'¹! cast that brand of shame!"

"Can I rejoice, or lift my voice in song?
 Behold my children given to the foe!
 My prophets martyred, yea, their life-blood spilt!
 My kings, my princes, and my holy priests
 Borne into distant exile, fetter-bound.
 Far from mine House, the Sacred Presence fled,
 Shunning the place of mine iniquity;
 Yea, thence did my Belovèd flee away,
 And left the beauty of my tent to wane
 And set in darkness nevermore to rise.
 'How doth the city, once with heroes thronged,
 Great 'mid the nations, now sit solitary!²'"
 Pausing, she glided to the Prophet's side,
 And with imploring utterance whispering spake:
 "Plead to thy God for this my bitter wound;
 Beseech him for the tempest-stricken soul!
 Until he softened say: 'It is enough!'
 And save my sons from exile and the sword."

With suppliant's plea he prayed before his Lord:
 "O God of mercy! let compassion flow,
 E'en as a father pitieth his son."
 And cried: "Doth not a father mourn his child
 Carried away to harsh captivity?
 And woe unto the son in exile chained,
 When at his father's board his place is void!"
 "Prophet! arise, depart!" the vision bade:
 "Call now the sleeping fathers from their rest;
 And Moses, yea, and Aaron shall awake;
 O let the shepherds peal to Heaven a wail,
 For lo! the wolves of night have torn the lamb!"

¹ Jer. xxxi. 22.

² Lam. i. 1.

The Prophet's voice with mighty yearning swelled,
And shook with heaving sobs Machpelah's cave :
"O glorious sires! lift up your voice and weep!
Your sons have erred; behold them captives bound!
If they, weak mortals, have transgressed the bond,
Where, fathers, doth your merit slumber now,
That sanctified of old the covenant?"
"What crave ye, sons, from me? the doom is fixed!
This is my judgment; this is my decree!
The shrine is desolate, bereft of men;
None cometh in upon the solemn day;
Behold, the steps of my belovèd fail."

"But thou wilt yet restore them as of old,
O thou Sustainer! thou that givest strength!
And pity Zion; for the time is come."

NINA DAVIS.